

128518-1

Serial No.: 10/712,729
Reply to Office action of May 9, 2006

Amendment to the specification

Please delete paragraph [0034] and replace with the following new paragraph.
The new paragraph is marked up to show changes made.

[0034] The present invention also provides a mandrel assembly for fabricating a quartz fiber optic sleeve tube. A mandrel assembly of the present invention is shown in Figure 11. Mandrel assembly 200 comprises a quartz tube 210 having a cylindrical wall [[212]] and an outer layer 214 of silica soot deposited on an outer surface of cylindrical wall [[212]]. Cylindrical wall 212 has an outer diameter [[216]] and inner diameter, which defines an annular space [[218]] having a substantially circular cross-section. A cylindrical support rod 220 straightens quartz tube 210 and minimizes tapering of the outer diameter due to creep. Cylindrical support rod 220 is disposed in annular space 218 such that cylindrical support rod 220 contacts quartz tube 210 at the temperature (also referred to hereinafter as the "sintering temperature") at which the outer layer 214 of silica soot is sintered and consolidated with quartz tube 210. The sintering temperature is in the range from about 1400°C to about 1600°C and, preferably, between about 1450°C and about 1550°C.

Please delete paragraph [0037] and replace with the following new paragraph.
The new paragraph is marked up to show changes made.

[0037] Outer layer 214 of silica soot comprises a central portion 213 having an outer surface [[215]] that is substantially parallel to cylindrical wall 212 of quartz tube 210 and a central portion length 217. Following sintering, in which the outer layer 214 of silica soot and the cylindrical wall 212 of quartz tube 210 are consolidated, central portion 213 will ultimately be used as a fiber optic sleeve tube. Cylindrical support rod provides support to quartz tube 210 along central portion length 217. In order to provide sufficient support for central portion 213, cylindrical support rod 220 has a rod length 221 that is at least as great as central portion length 217. Cylindrical support rod 220 should extend beyond both ends of central portion 213.